

**Welfare to Work Commission
Of the Suffolk County Legislature**

Minutes of the May 21, 2010 Meeting

Present: Richard Koubek, Chair; Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; Bridget DePasquale; Ellen Krakow; Richard Krebs for Eric Lopez; Zoe Taylor for Gwen Branch; Don Friedman; Roland Hampson; Vincent Cassidy for Pam Killoran; Frank Casiglia; Michael Haynes; Mike Stoltz; Nina Leonhardt; Fred Combs for Joan Grant; Jack Caffey; Peggy Boyd

Excused: Judy Cahn; Rob Greenberger; Peter Barnett; Jane Devine; Idania Aponte

Guests: Dr. Edward Hernandez, Deputy Commissioner, SCDSS; David Cohen, President, Suffolk County Quality Consortium

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the April 9th meeting were accepted unanimously on a motion by Don Friedman, seconded by Mike Stoltz.
2. **Discussion of the Draft Sober Homes Report:** Chair Richard Koubek, noting that each member of the Commission had received a final draft copy of the sober homes report, thanked the members of the Sober Homes Committee (Peggy Boyd and Michael Stoltz, Co-chairs, Leg. Kate Browning, Kathy Liguori, Ellen Krakow, Bridget DePasquale, Jack Caffey, Dr. Edward Hernandez) for their diligent effort over the past year in organizing the two public hearings, three focus groups and drafting the report. Vice Chair Kathy Liguori thanked Mr. Koubek for drafting the report. Mr. Koubek expressed the regrets of Legislator Browning who had a legislative meeting in Riverhead that prevented her attendance at the Commission meeting and he called attention to her e-mail expressing strong support for the draft report. Mr. Koubek then chaired a Commission discussion of the report.
 - a. Nina Leonhardt expressed concern that the website cited in footnote 6 did not appear to be a site created and managed by a webmaster. Mr. Koubek responded that, based on her concerns, he checked out both the website and article's author who does appear to be a recognized authority on sober homes. He further noted that the definition of a sober home taken from his site was the most cogent definition which reflected the definitions cited in testimony at the public hearings. David Cohen noted that there was an error in the definition in that it stated that sober-home residents are required to attend 12 step programs, which in fact, the courts have not permitted. The Commission agreed that this language should be changed to "recommended."
 - b. David Cohen stated that, as President of the Suffolk County Quality Consortium of treatment providers and as a LI Congregations Associations and Neighborhoods (LICAN) member who has worked to create a LI Sober Living Network of sober-homes providers, he felt that the report was very accurate in its analysis of the New York State Office of Alcohol

and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) regarding their failure to adopt policies to regulate sober homes.

- c. There was much discussion of why OASAS has not applied the “Supportive Living” housing, which they are authorized to regulate, to Suffolk County sober homes, since this housing seemed quite similar to sober housing.
 - i. Mr. Cohen pointed out that Suffolk County appears to be unique in New York State in not having any of this OASAS regulated “Supportive Living” housing and in having a proliferation of unregulated, substandard sober homes. The Commission agreed that this important information should be added to the report.
 - ii. Ellen Krakow suggested that the report’s recommendation that OASAS study the application of “Supportive Living” housing to Suffolk County sober homes be amended to include a call for an OASAS analysis of this housing that would include: (1) the number of “Supportive Living” homes in New York State; (2) the counties in which they are located; (3) how they are funded and staffed; (4) the populations they are serving; (5) how these residents are referred to the “Supportive Living” homes; (6) the limitations on the length of stay in these residences. The Commission consented to this change.
- d. There was discussion as to whether the report should explicitly state that the OASAS testimony, dated October 29th, 2009, was not received by the Commission until April, 2010. It was agreed that there be no reference to the date and receipt of the OASAS testimony but that the report should have the actual OASAS testimony appended to it.
- e. Kathy Liguori, noting the length of the report, suggested that there be an executive summary. Mr. Koubek suggested that there be a one page summary of the report’s recommendations that would be appended to the report. The Commission agreed with this recommendation.
- f. Additionally, there were some minor editorial changes to the report recommended and accepted by the Commission.
- g. A motion to accept the report as drafted and amended was made by Mike Stoltz, seconded by Peggy Boyd. The motion carried: Yes -14; No -0; Abstentions – 2 (Vincent Cassidy and Richard Krebs.) Subsequent to the meeting and electronic distribution of the amended report, five electronic Yes votes were cast by: Rob Greenberger; Peter Barnett; Judy Cahn; Jane Devine and Idiana Aponte. The final vote was: Yes – 19; No – 0; Abstentions – 2.

3. **Monthly Staffing Report:** Tabled.

4. **Employment Assessment and SCDSS Liaison Committees:** Roland Hampson reported that Tom Grecco of SCDSS has agreed to meet with the Committee to discuss disability assessments and other matters, including the recommendation of the SCDSS Liaison Committee that the SCDSS application be revised to include an option for a prospective client to identify a nonprofit agency from which they are currently receiving help. This would allow SCDSS to contact that agency for

background information on the client which is often maintained by trained case managers at the nonprofit agency. Mr. Koubek stated that he had an opportunity to informally present this concept to SCDSS Commissioner Greg Blass soon after the Committee's May 5th meeting and that Commissioner Blass seemed quite interested. Roland Hampson stated that Committee Chair Peter Barnett's written proposal was submitted by Mr. Koubek to Commissioner Blass who has taken a personal interest in it.

5. **Child Care Committee:** Chair Kathy Liguori reported that the wait list for subsidized child care is being exhausted at SCDSS however she reported that it continues to be a problem since many populations who were served before are still not being served due to new income eligibility standards. In addition the increase in the daily rate and decrease in the weekly rate, which the Commission addressed in 2009, have made the problem of underserved children worse in that many parents who are authorized require less than the 30 hours or more of care per week. Parents (now not eligible) cannot afford to send their children on a weekly basis because the increase daily rate has discouraged them from using regulated child care. She further noted that a meeting with Dennis Nowak will be convened in June to discuss improving communication between Child protective Services and child-care providers.
6. **Next Meeting:** Friday, July 9th, 9:30 AM in Conference Room A of the SCDOL One Stop Center. [Note: the May and June Commission meetings were combined for the May 21st meeting.]